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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 7 May 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 143rd meeting, the first of the 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

It is a privilege for me to extend to representatives a warm welcome to the 1990 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. May I express my sincere appreciation to all members for the honour conferred upon me and my country through my election as Chairman of this important forum, and for the confidence reposed in me.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express gratitude for the exemplary manner in which Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeva presided over the Commission's deliberations during its last session.

As I undertake my duties for the current session, I wish to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, whose personal initiatives and contributions in the cause of disarmament have set a singular example. It is gratifying for me to know also that I can count on the expertise and experience of the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-chung, and his dedicated staff.

We are particularly fortunate to have in our midst the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Komatina, with whom many of us have had the privilege of being associated both at Geneva and at New York.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission is meeting on the threshold of a new decade and in a world caught up in fundamental transition and transformation. The global political climate is rapidly changing towards new patterns of international relationships, foreshadowing new opportunities and challenges in our common search

(The Chairman)

for a more secure and peaceful world. The continuing trend towards rapprochement and mutual accommodation among the major Powers has led to the easing of international tensions. On the continent of Europe especially, political and even physical barriers have crumbled in the face of the dramatic changes that have taken place in Eastern and Central Europe.

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(The Chairman)

These historic developments have instilled a new sense of hope and give promise of accelerating all ongoing disarmament negotiations, and these in turn should spur our own efforts and enhance the prospects of our specific contributions to the disarmament process.

At this stage I deem it essential to reflect on the role and significance of our Commission, in order to enable us to focus better on the task ahead of us. As members may recall, since its reconstitution more than a decade ago, the Commission has played a notable role in giving an impetus to negotiations on disarmament. By adopting a selective agenda, by engaging in in-depth deliberations and by elaborating specific recommendations to the General Assembly, the Commission has made unique contributions to the process of multilateral disarmament endeavours. In my view, the most tangible contribution its members can make is in marshalling political will and exerting untiring efforts in the adoption of specific consensus recommendations on the various disarmament issues on our agenda, thereby bringing this annual session of the Disarmament Commission to an optimum result.

The General Assembly has mandated us to consider, and to make specific recommendations on, a number of agenda items. These include both relatively new and perennial ones. At this juncture in our common efforts to limit and reduce armaments, I should like to express my hope that we shall finalize the consideration of all the agenda items, with the exception of item 10, concerning objective information on military matters. As we are aware, some of these have remained for too long before the Commission. We should therefore ensure that our work is item-specific and geared towards the formulation of recommendations. That is what the General Assembly expects from our endeavours.

The key to progress is to free ourselves from the over-complicated and controversial draft texts of earlier sessions and to search for a fresh approach.

(The Chairman)

This calls for the adoption of policies and strategies that are broadly acceptable to the majority of members. Indeed, a fundamental reorientation has become necessary in our thinking on disarmament in its multifaceted aspects. Scientific and technological developments have brought out one indisputable reality: the interdependence of States and the interrelated nature of global issues. Not only has the world shrunk to a global village, but the multidimensional nature of peace, security and economic well-being has become self-evident. As we enter the 1990s, these realities should be reflected in our policies towards disarmament. Only then is it possible to develop new thinking.

In concluding, I wish to state that I shall endeavour to perform the tasks of the chairmanship of the Commission to the best of my ability. In undertaking my duties, I am gratified to know that I can count on the co-operation and support of all members.

It is now my privilege to wish all representatives a productive and result-oriented session, marked by harmony, co-operation and a sense of common destiny, which the subject matter of our endeavours demands.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, at our organizational session last year we tentatively approved the provisional agenda before the Commission.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.26/Rev.1.

The agenda was adopted.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States): I wish to state with regard to item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament", that the position of the United States is, I believe, well known and that there is no need to repeat it.

The CHAIRMAN: I take note of the position of the United States on agenda item 7.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to come to the question of organization of work for the session. However, before we consider the specific matters relating to the organization of work, I wish to take up an important subject concerning the Disarmament Commission. As members of the Commission may recall, during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly a series of consultations were held under the chairmanship of Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya with regard to the reform measures for the Commission's work. The consultations ended successfully with an agreed text on the reform measures, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was contained in the annex of resolution 44/119 C, adopted by consensus. Since then, a large number of delegations have proposed that the text of the annex should be formally adopted by the Commission.

Members of the Commission will recall that paragraph 118 (b) of the Final Document of the tenth special session states:

> "The Disarmament Commission shall function under the rules of procedure relating to the committees of the General Assembly with such modifications as the Commission may deem necessary and shall make every effort to ensure that, in so far as possible, decisions on substantive issues be adopted by consensus." (resolution A/S-10/2, para. 118 (b))

In this regard, the adoption of the annex of resolution 44/119 C by the Commission is in conformity with the provisions of the Final Document. The text of the annex is now reproduced in document A/CN.10/137, which has been distributed.

If I hear no comments, I shall take it that the Disarmament Commission adopts the text contained in document A/CN.10/137.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: For the purpose of record, I shall now read out the adopted text, contained in document A/CN.10/137, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission":

"1. Mandate

"The Disarmament Commission reaffirms its mandate contained in paragraph 118 (a) of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament (hereinafter referred to as the "Final Document").

"2. Decision-making method

"The decision-making method described in paragraph 118 (b) of the Final Document should be maintained.

"3. Agenda items

"1. The Disarmament Commission could have a general agenda and a working agenda for each substantive session. The working agenda should be agreed at the Commission's organizational session.

"2. For each session, the working agenda should be limited to a maximum of four substantive items for in-depth consideration.

"3. From 1991, no subject should, in principle, be maintained on the working agenda for more than three consecutive years. At each session, the Commission should review, for possible reconsideration, any subject that had been suspended.

"4. If no agreement can be reached on a specific agenda item, the report of the Commission should contain a joint statement or a Chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect views or positions of different delegations, particularly in the case of those agenda items to be suspended for a period of time.

(The Chairman)

"5. At its 1990 session, the Commission should make every effort to conclude all its agenda items, except the new substantive items.

"4. Subsidiary bodies

"1. At each annual session, the Disarmament Commission should not establish more than four subsidiary bodies for its substantive agenda items. The allocation of the agenda items to the four subsidiary bodies and the appointment of chairmen for these subsidiary bodies should be decided at the organizational session of the Commission, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

"2. The chairmanship of subsidiary bodies should, in principle, be rotated each year; however, at its organizational session, the Commission may decide to extend the term of office of any chairman in the interest of effective work and the speedy conclusion of an item.

"5. Duration of the substantive session

"1. The Disarmament Commission should meet for a period not exceeding four weeks for in-depth deliberations on substantive items.

"2. The duration of each substantive session, in accordance with the established practice, should be flexible and could be shortened. In order to utilize efficiently the conference-servicing resources available, the Commission should decide the duration of each substantive session at its organizational session.

"6. Organization of work of the session

"1. Each session may have a general debate on agenda items in the plenary meetings, not exceeding three days' duration.

"2. Except in the case of new items, there should be no general exchange of views in the subsidiary bodies. The general exchange of views on new items should not exceed two meetings.

(The Chairman)

"3. Subsidiary bodies could begin their work in parallel with the general exchange of views in the plenary meetings.

"4. No more than two official meetings should be held simultaneously. This restriction, however, would not apply to informal consultations.

"5. The meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies should be provided with full meetings services.

"6. All the officers of the Commission should be elected at its organizational session.

"7. Consultations

"The Chairman of the Disarmament Commission should conduct consultations on matters relating to the work of the Commission, in particular on its working agenda, year round, especially during the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly."

The adoption of the above-mentioned ways and means to enchance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, I trust, could be a milestone for the future work of the Commission and the revitalization of its entrusted role in the field of disarmament, as provided in the Final Document. It demonstrated the concerted efforts of all delegations for the effective functioning of the Commission.

Now I should like to turn to the specific organization of work for the current session. In this connection members of the Commission may recall that we have conducted a series of open-ended consultations during the past few months both in Geneva and in New York. During the course of consultations we reached agreements on a number of issues regarding the organization of work for the session. I wish now to put the following arrangements to the Commission for consideration and adoption.

(The Chairman)

First, on the general exchange of views, in view of the limited time available to the Commission, it was the general understanding that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. Four meetings have been allocated to such purposes, as indicated in the general programme of work which has been circulated. I should like to urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the Secretariat as soon as possible. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. In addition, 25 copies of statements should be provided to the Secretariat.

Is there any comment on this question?

If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: On the establishment of subsidiary bodies, the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session requested the Disarmament Commission to consider various questions in its resolutions 44/113 B, 44/116 O, 44/116 M, 44/116 C, 44/119 H and 44/116 E, regarding respectively the nuclear capability of South Africa, item 5; review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, item 6; naval armaments and disarmament, item 7; conventional disarmament, item 8; declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Deacde, item 9; and objective information on military matters, item 10. Furthermore, with regard to the question concerning various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, as contained in agenda item 4 (a) and (b), the Commission at its last session agreed to continue consideration of this item.

(The Chairman)

As a result of consultations, the following subsidiary bodies of the Commission could be established to deal with various substantive agenda items, with the flexibility of allocating time to groups during the course of their deliberations.

First, the Committee of the Whole would in its initial stage deal with item 4 (a) and (b), regarding the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, and a contact group would be set up on this subject. The Committee would also consider the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as appropriate, as well as other business deemed necessary. Secondly, Working Group I would deal with item 5, on the nuclear capability of South Africa. Thirdly, Working Group II would deal with item 6, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Fourthly, Working Group III would deal with item 8, regarding the question of conventional disarmament. Fifthly, Working Group IV would deal with item 9, regarding the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

I come now to the question of the equitable distribution of chairmanships among subsidiary bodies. As to the chairmanships of those subsidiary bodies, I should like to announce that, in accordance with the results of our meetings of consultation, the following arrangements could be made, taking into account equitable geographical distribution of the chairmanships of the subsidiary bodies.

Working Group I, on item 5, regarding South Africa's nuclear capability, would be chaired by the representative of Nepal, Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana. Working Group II, on item 6, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, would be chaired by the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan. Working Group III, on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament, would be chaired by the representative of Denmark, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin. Working Group IV, on item 9, regarding the Third

(The Chairman)

Disarmament Decade, would be chaired by the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe.

Regarding the chairmanship of the Committee of the Whole, I understand that, as was the case in previous years, the Chairman of the Commission would take that chairmanship. In this connection, I wish to designate a friend of the Chairman, Mr. Sergei Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, to be Chairman of the Contact Group to deal with item 4 (a) and (b).

I wish to point out that in the course of consultations there has been general agreement on such arrangements. Is there any comment on those arrangements? If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission so decides.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to extend my warm congratulations to the Chairmen of the various subsidiary bodies on their appointments.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): It gives me great pleasure to extend the warmest felicitations of my delegation to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. Having had the privilege of working closely with you, we are well acquainted with your knowledge, ability and diplomatic skill. We look forward to working under your guidance for the success of our work in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

As you have pointed out, the current session is being held at a particularly propitious stage in international relations. With the steady movement towards relationships of understanding and co-operation between the major Powers and their alliances, the prospects for arms control and disarmament have never been better. We earnestly hope that the deliberations in this forum will serve to quicken the pace of meaningful multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

Allow me to express my deep appreciation to the members of the Disarmament Commission for entrusting me with the task of co-ordinating the deliberations of

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Working Group I, on the nuclear capability of South Africa. It is a matter of great importance, with a direct bearing on the implementation of the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity on the Denuclearization of Africa. The Disarmament Commission is expected to complete its deliberations on this important item this year.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my appreciation to my colleague, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, under whose guidance the Working Group has covered a lot of ground.

I look forward to being guided by my colleagues in the Working Group and to benefiting from the close co-operation and expertise of the Secretariat in carrying out this task.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to draw the attention of members to two items that I have not addressed, namely, agenda item 7, entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament", and agenda item 10, entitled "Objective information on military matters". Members may recall that extensive and intensive consultations on these two items have been carried out, as I stated earlier, both at Geneva and at New York. To date, we have practically reached agreement on all their aspects except on one aspect of item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament". During the 1990 substantive session, as in the year 1989, substantive and open-ended consultations will be held under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission regarding item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament". The Chairman of the Commission will designate a friend of the Chairman to co-ordinate the consultations. In this case, I intend to designate the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti. I wish to repeat that the consultations to be held on item 7 will continue to be under the responsibility of the Chairman of the Commission. Consultations will have to be continued regarding the placement in the Commission's report of the outcome of the deliberations on the subject. That will appear as an annex in the report of the Commission.

I sincerely hope that in the days ahead, perhaps during this week, we can finalize the consultations on this last aspect of the item "Naval armaments and disarmament", which concerns placing the results of the deliberations of the consultations as an annex in the report of the Commission. I take it that the Commission agrees to proceed in this manner on agenda item 7.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Concerning agenda item 10, entitled "Objective information on military matters", consultations to date have resulted in complete agreement on all aspects of how we should deal with this item. For the benefit of those members

(The Chairman)

who have not been familiar with this matter, I shall read out all those aspects regarding item 10, as follows:

"A consultation group will be established for item 10 regarding objective information on military matters during the 1990 substantive session, with the understanding that objective information on military matters, as well as all other substantive issues on the working agenda, should be given in-depth consideration during the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

"The time-frame for the consideration of item 10 should be in the first half of the 1990 substantive session, which means that the Group should not hold any meetings after Wednesday, 16 May. It is further understood that consideration of item 10 will be at the preliminary stage during the 1990 substantive session, not engaging in any negotiation on a text of the subject."

The candidate for Chairman of the Consultation Group is be the representative of Austria, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner.

If there is no objection with respect to that procedure on item 10, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now consider the conclusion of substantive agenda items of the current session. Members will note that paragraph 3 (5) of the adopted Annex of resolution 44/119 C states:

"At its 1990 session, the Commission should make every effort to conclude all its agenda items, except the new substantive items."

At the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission held on 1 and 7 December 1989, as well as at the open-ended meetings of consultations since then, there has been a general understanding that the Commission would conclude all its

(The Chairman)

outstanding substantive agenda items during the 1990 session, except the new one, namely, "Objective information on military matters".

In view of the foregoing, it is understood that the Commission should conclude its agenda items with specific recommendations by consensus if possible. However, paragraph 3 (4) of the Annex states:

"If no agreement can be reached on a specific agenda item, the report of the Commission should contain a joint statement or a Chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect views or positions of different delegations, particularly in the case of those agenda items to be suspended for a period of time."

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: With respect to the allocation of time and resources for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed, and the Secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the Chairmen of the various groups. However, a general programme of work, as contained in document A/CN.10/1990/CRP.1, for the entire session has been agreed and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment if necessary. It is understood that no more than two simultaneous formal meetings of subsidiary bodies will be held, except the informal consultations. As was pointed out, it was also understood that no meeting will be allocated to the consultation group on item 10 after 16 May.

(The Chairman)

Regarding documentation for the current session, I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, namely, document A/44/42, and documents A/CN.10/134 and A/CN.10/135, will serve as the basic documents for consideration. These documents contain a number of major proposals on the subjects to be considered this year. Previous reports of the Commission will, of course, also be useful for reference. In addition, document A/CN.10/138 has been issued. It contains a preliminary report of the Secretary-General on the subject of the nuclear capability of South Africa - agenda item 5 - pursuant to General Assembly resolution 44/113 B. The Commission will also have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on various agenda items. I should like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for further processing.

On the status of non-governmental organizations, as was the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to participate in the work of the Disarmament Commission as observers in the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole.

Having settled the organization of work, I should now like to call on those delegations that wish to make general statements on the various subjects contained in the agenda at this stage.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): First of all let me congratulate you, Ambassador Sutresna, and congratulate ourselves, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. The Swedish delegation looks forward to working under such an experienced, wise and knowledgeable Chairman.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Bagbeni for the skilful manner in which he conducted the 1989 session of the Disarmament Commission. Thanks not least to his personal efforts, it was possible to make progress on some of the issues on last year's agenda. He has also been instrumental in the consultations concerning the future role of the Disarmament Commission. This is also a subject which I should like to touch upon briefly before addressing the substantive issues before us.

Over 10 years have passed since the Disarmament Commission was re-established as a result of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether the Commission has lived up to the expectations of a decade ago. Have we made the best use of this forum? A primary aim of the Disarmament Commission is to be a body for deliberations on international disarmament matters which are not necessarily ripe for formal negotiations. The Commission's deliberations could thereby serve as a preparatory stage before the commencement of formal negotiations.

The Disarmament Commission has undoubtedly proved useful in this respect. It has thus been possible to explore several important areas and reach consensus on these matters, such as basic principles for the international verification of disarmament agreements and fundamental features of confidence-building.

The work performed by the Commission on these issues is in line with the efforts to promote common security. Other important subjects, such as conventional disarmament, or naval armaments and disarmament, have also been thoroughly examined. The discussions have helped clarify the complicated issues involved. Nevertheless, there are reasons for concern.

Multilateral efforts towards disarmament on a global level have had very limited success in the last 10 years, in spite of a more favourable international political climate, which you, Sir, also pointed out in your introduction. After a

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

period of deterioration in the early 1980s, we are now witnessing a distinct improvement in the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United Nations has also been successful in many areas of its activities. It is a matter of concern, however, that so few of these general trends have been reflected in the work of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

According to its mandate, the Disarmament Commission should make every effort to adopt decisions on substantive issues by consensus. It is therefore not surprising that it has proved difficult to make progress on some of the items. Instead, they have remained on the agenda without tangible results. A more efficient approach should be applied. It is essential that the guidelines concerning the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, which are annexed to General Assembly resolution 44/119 C, and which have just been formally adopted, should be implemented. But above all, there must be a greater willingness to seek and contribute to consensus. Otherwise there is a risk that many countries may lose interest in the Commission.

The Disarmament Commission has the potential of being an important forum for a truly international exchange of views on multilateral disarmament. We should all stand to lose if the interest and participation of States in this forum were to diminish. In today's world, it is short-sighted to believe that the views of the international community at large can be ignored. It is necessary to find broad multilateral solutions to security problems and disarmament issues facing us all.

I should now like to turn to some of the substantive issues before us. There is a growing realization of the need for openness and transparency in all military matters. The "open skies" proposal in connection with the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the seminar on

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

military doctrines held at Vienna earlier this year within the framework of the military CSCE negotiations are important examples of the willingness to seek constructive measures in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. My Government is therefore pleased to note that the item "Objective information on military matters" has been introduced on the Commission's agenda for 1990.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

Openness and transparency are prerequisities for successful disarmament measures and for the effective verification of disarmament and arms-limitation agreements. Moreover, openness and transparency may themselves serve significant confidence-building and security-building functions. Thus, the military doctrine seminar in Vienna proved to be a confidence-building measure in itself.

By adopting resolution 44/116 E, the General Assembly expressed the belief that the adoption of confidence-building measures to promote openness and transparency would contribute to the prevention of misperceptions of military capabilities and intentions. The General Assembly also expressed the belief that balanced and objective information on all military matters, in particular from nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, would contribute to the building of confidence among States. Pursuant to that resolution, the five nuclear-weapon States have taken on a responsibility to display openness and transparency in all areas of military activity, regardless of whether the activity takes place on land, in the air or at sea.

There is a need for more openness, transparency and confidence-building with regard to naval nuclear deployments. There is not a priori a greater need for secrecy at sea than on land or in the air. As President Bush stated in the General Assembly in 1989:

> "Openness is the enemy of mistrust, and every step towards a more open world is a step towards the new world we seek" (A/44/PV.4, p. 57).

In order to increase openness and transparency concerning the navigation of vessels carrying nuclear and conventional weapons, possibilities for exchange of information and greater openness should be explored concerning all types of military structures and major activities. That includes amphibious operations and joint operations of land, air and naval forces. Experiences gained from the CSCE process may be useful in that context.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

In that connection, the nuclear-weapon States should reconsider their current practice of neither confirming nor denying the presence or absence of nuclear weapons on board any particular ship at any particular time.

The possibilities of sharing information gathered through observation by satellites or other observation means over international waters should be studied separately, as well as in conjunction with similar projects involving national territories. In that regard, observations drawn from the ongoing United Nations study on verification may provide a useful contribution.

While land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles are in the process of being eliminated, naval disarmament has scarcely begun. That observation is all the more disconcerting because of the flexible and unpredictable deployment of naval forces.

When land and air forces are reduced, the relative significance of conventional and nuclear naval forces increases. As States increasingly rely on agreements on force reductions and associated confidence-building and security-building measures, it is crucial that their overall security situation should be addressed in disarmament negotiations. Naval forces form an integral part of overall military constellations. They must therefore not be excluded from arms limitation and disarmament.

Sea-borne strategic nuclear weapons are the subject of bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the short-range and medium-range sea-borne nuclear weapons intended for targets at sea as well as on land are not addressed in current negotiations, nor is the widespread deployment of increasingly sophisticated sea-based nuclear-armed cruise missiles.

Nuclear weapons intended for targets at sea threaten to bring about a lowering of the nuclear threshold and consequently have implications for international security as a whole. The early use of sub-strategic nuclear weapons in a conflict

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

may be encouraged by the theoretical possibility of using such nuclear weapons in a military encounter at sea without causing direct damage to civilian life or property. Against that background, unilateral steps in the direction of reducing the number of tactical nuclear weapons deployed at sea are indeed to be welcomed.

An important step towards the complete denuclearization of naval forces would be to prohibit all nuclear weapons on all ships and submarines other than those classes specifically designated by agreement. Such a ban should include all sea-launched cruise missiles with nuclear warheads and could be achieved either through negotiations or through reciprocal unilateral measures.

The high seas are part of our common heritage. Hence, all States, regardless of the size of their navies, have a stake in maintaining an up-to-date and credible international régime of principles and rules guiding the conduct of naval units. The legal régime governing the freedom of the high seas has, however, not kept up with the developments of the twentieth century. Current laws of sea warfare date from the turn of the century and need to be modernized. Sweden has therefore presented a proposal for an updated protocol concerning the use of sea-mines. A revised version of that protocol will be circulated during this session of the Commission. Furthermore, the vulnerability of naval units is enhanced by the lack of an explicit and multilaterally accepted code of conduct for naval forces exercising in close proximity at sea. The need for and the potential of such a multilateral code are demonstrated by the successful implementation of several bilateral agreements on the prevention of incidents at sea.

Recent accidents with nuclear-powered submarines have underlined the increasing ecological hazards to the marine environment connected with the use of sea-borne reactors. The proposal concerning international guidelines for sea-borne nuclear reactors put forth by Iceland during last year's General Assembly session therefore merits close attention.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

By posing a threat to the marine environment, nuclear-powered vessels present particular problems. Several reported accidents with nuclear-propelled submarines underline the need to extend the existing régime concerning the notification of nuclear accidents. Such an extension should include accidents with nuclear-powered military vessels in international waters, even when those accidents do not have transboundary effects. The question of liability for such accidents should also be studied. The ideas regarding naval armaments and disarmament that I have outlined today are contained in a working paper submitted during this session by Finland, Indonesia and Sweden.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) stands out as the most widely endorsed agreement in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, with more than 140 States Parties. It is the corner-stone of the international non-proliferation régime. Although the NPT has been largely successful, the fact that not all States have acceded to it is a cause of concern.

The non-proliferation régime is encountering some disquieting trends. There is proliferation of nuclear-capable missiles, and there are reports that some States may be acquiring nuclear-weapon capabilities. It is clear, therefore, that the world community must make great efforts to ensure the continued viability of the non-proliferation régime.

The fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will take place place in a few months' time, is crucial for the future of the NPT and the whole non-proliferation régime. The third and last meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the fourth Review Conference concluded its work successfully last week. That augurs well for the Review Conference.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

With regard to the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself after 1995, when a decision is to be taken concerning its extension, two factors are of particular importance in ensuring that the authority of the Treaty is not eroded. First, all States must accede to the Treaty; secondly, all obligations laid down in the Treaty must be fulfilled.

The obvious way for nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitment under article VI of the Treaty would be to make drastic reductions in their arsenals of nuclear weapons and to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

More than a quarter of a century has gone by since the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty, committed themselves to seeking a stop to all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time. They reaffirmed that commitment 20 years ago in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Five years ago the United States and the Soviet Union announced the beginning of bilateral negotiations that should lead "to the complete elimination of nuclear arms everywhere".

If the agreed objective is the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons, it is hard to see any need for continued testing. A tangible measure towards ending all nuclear-weapon tests would be to start negotiations immediately on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) should be regarded as a major achievement for quantitative nuclear-arms reductions. Symbolically and politically it has had great impact. The elaborate verification provisions contained in the Treaty are unprecedented. At present the United States and the Soviet Union are in the process of negotiating considerable cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals, expecting an agreement to emerge in the course of this year. That is a significant and welcome development.

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

But, considering that the nuclear arsenals are larger today than in 1970, when the Non-Proliferation Treaty entered into force, the process of nuclear disarmament must go further.

In this connection, let me express my country's satisfaction at the plans announced recently by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) regarding short-range nuclear weapons in Europe. The Swedish Government welcomes that step as a further contribution towards nuclear reductions in Europe and enhanced security for all European States.

In the field of conventional disarmament and arms limitation the developments at the military negotiations in Vienna give rise to optimism. There are good prospects for an agreement on conventional-force reductions in Europe aiming at a balance of conventional forces at lower levels. Promising work has also been carried out in the negotiations to enhance and develop the confidence-building and security-building measures that were agreed upon at the Stockholm Conference.

In closing, let me say that the ongoing fundamental transformation of the world political order is by far the most profound and comprehensive change since the Second World War. It entails new and unprecedented opportunities for disarmament and arms-limitation measures. Let us not waste those opportunities.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 7 May 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. HAYES (Ireland): Speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, I should like to begin by offering you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your election to the office of Chairman of the 1990 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We hope that under your wise guidance our efforts will meet with success.

This is an important, indeed a crucial, session for the Commission, which marks a turning point in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The Commission has carried out very valuable work over the past 11 years, as is shown, for example, in its agreement on principles of verification and on confidence-building measures. However, there has been a growing perception that the Disarmament Commission needed to review its procedures to enable it to fulfil its mandate more effectively.

One of the notable achievements of the General Assembly's forty-fourth session was the attainment of a consensus on ways and means of enhancing the functioning of the Commission. A notable feature of the lengthy consultations which resulted in that consensus was the constructive atmosphere and the spirit of compromise which prevailed. Those consultations also underlined the universal recognition of the United Nations Disarmament Commission's important role as a deliberative body for the consideration and making of recommendations on selected specific issues in the field of disarmament. The Twelve are firmly committed to the reform process of the Disarmament Commission and believe that the speedy implementation of the agreed programme contained in General Assembly resolution 44/119 C will play a very important part in enhancing the effectiveness of the Commission and in enabling it to fulfil properly the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly at its first special session on disarmament. The implementation of the reform measures will start this year and should be completed by 1991.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

However, attainment of this means that we shall have to meet the major challenge presented in paragraph 3 (5) of the reform measures, which recommends that the Commission should make every effort at its current session to conclude all its agenda items, except this year's sole substantive new item.

The Twelve are ready to do all they can to meet this challenge. We are sure that, with a spirit of compromise, significant results can be achieved. If consensus cannot be attained in 1990 on one or another of the items on the current agenda, the Twelve believe that the Commission should apply strictly the procedure provided for in paragraph 3 (4) of the reform measures, which allows for an agreed statement or a Chairman's summary.

I am sure that progress in our deliberations will be facilitated by the continuing improvement in East-West relations, the relaxation of international tensions and the conciliatory and forward-looking atmosphere that was a striking feature of the First Committee at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF Treaty) is being successfully implemented. We also look forward to the conclusion of a Treaty on Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START) and of an agreement to reduce conventional armed forces in Europe. While significant progress has been made in the Geneva negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention, major obstacles remain to be overcome.

In a related field, we look forward next year to the third review conference of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the opportunity to strengthen further the authority of this important treaty régime, to which all States are strongly encouraged to accede.

However, it is essential that the spirit which prevailed at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly should also obtain here. While significant developments have been witnessed in the past year at the bilateral and regional

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

levels, much remains to be accomplished. The central issues in the field of multilateral disarmament, which have faced the international community for decades, still constitute a formidable agenda that needs to be addressed in an adequate manner. Regrettably, while the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission have proved their value as forums for discussion by the international community, the degree of progress registered at the Conference on Disarmament, and, for that matter, in this body also, has not yet matched expectations. It is clear that positive movement on multilateral disarmament negotiations requires the support of the whole international community.

The Twelve have frequently underlined the central role of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and have stressed the need for constructive parallelism and positive interaction between the bilateral and multilateral processes. This implies a role for the United Nations which will allow it to make headway on the many important arms control and disarmament issues which are on its agenda. As part of this process, it is necessary to continue our efforts at organizing the work of the United Nations more effectively, with a view to streamlining and rationalizing its disarmament machinery and thus strengthening the function of the Organization in this area, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter, as we are discussing under agenda item 6. At a time of progress in bilateral and in certain regional negotiations, it is essential that the same spirit should be applied at the multilateral level. Multilateral action is of increasing importance and international peace, and security will not be fully realized in its absence.

I should now like to turn to the substantive items on the Commission's agenda. The Twelve attach great importance to all the items on this agenda. We have made clear in successive statements to the General Assembly that nuclear

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

disarmament is one of the Twelve's highest priorities. The United States of America and the Soviet Union have a crucial responsibility in this regard. Therefore, we believe that the need for progress in nuclear arms control and disarmament demands that special attention should continue to be paid to such issues. Similarly, the Twelve have repeatedly stated that conventional disarmament is essential and should urgently be pursued as an integral part of the disarmament process, in which all States should be actively involved.

Innumerable lives have been lost throughout the world in conflicts waged with conventional weapons, and increasingly powerful weapons continue to be developed. Expenditure on conventional armaments and forces absorbs an overwhelming proportion of military budgets and has increasingly become a serious economic strain on a large number of countries. Regional agreements are of particular relevance but must take account of the particular characteristics of each region. We believe that the adoption of regional arms-control and disarmament measures constitutes one of the most important and effective ways through which States can contribute to the global arms-control and disarmament process. Conventional-arms control is an issue which we take very seriously in Europe, where the concentration of troops and armaments is high, and we are making urgent efforts to deal with this question.

As members are aware, there are profound political and economic changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe which hold out the prospect of greatly strengthening peace and security on our continent. At the same time, two major negotiations, on conventional armed forces in Europe and on confidence-building and security-building measures, are currently taking place at Vienna within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The Twelve welcome the progress attained to date in these negotiations and look forward to their early and successful conclusion. We believe that these negotiations offer

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

a useful example of what can be achieved by regional efforts in this field. We urgently request countries in other areas to engage in such efforts. We would strongly support initiatives in other regions to achieve similar goals in conventional armed forces.

The Twelve believe that the subject of conventional disarmament should be kept to the forefront of the multilateral debate on disarmament. The growing recognition of the overall importance of conventional arms control and disarmament, which was reflected in the adoption without a vote at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly of three of the four resolutions on conventional-disarmament issues and confidence-building measures, should be welcomed. The Twelve welcome the progress made at the 1989 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, in the Working Group chaired by a member of the Twelve, on important elements of the draft report on conventional disarmament, which we hope can be finalized this year with a substantive result. The Twelve also believe that the topic of conventional arms transfers merits consideration by the international community. Consideration of this issue in the United Nations may be facilitated by the increased support for General Assembly resolution 44/116 N.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

The Twelve welcome the inclusion of agenda item 10, "Objective information on military matters". We hope that work on this subject will be productive and are ready to participate actively in it. As we indicated in our reply to the Secretary-General in respect of General Assembly resolution 43/75 G (A/44/396) of 18 July 1989, the Twelve remain convinced that a better flow of information on military capabilities would help to relieve international tension and contribute to the building of confidence among States at the global, regional and subregional levels. Such a flow is an important prerequisite for the conclusion of verifiable arms-control and disarmament agreements.

The Twelve believe that the encouraging manner in which the Stockholm Declaration on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe has been implemented since it came into force in January 1987 has marked a significant step towards greater military transparency in the region and the breaking down of barriers of mistrust between States.

The success of the Vienna seminar on military policy and doctrines, held earlier this year, has also contributed significantly to advancing the cause of openness and predictability about military activities in Europe. The Twelve hope that the Vienna negotiations will shortly achieve their objective of building upon and expanding the results achieved at Stockholm, with the aim of elaborating and adopting a new set of measures designed to reduce the risk of military confrontation in Europe.

The Twelve consider agenda item 4, on nuclear and conventional disarmament, to be of particular importance. In our view, the halting and reversing of the nuclear-arms race continues to be one of the most serious challenges before the world today. While all States should endeavour to make progress in this field, the

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

nuclear-weapon States which possess the most important nuclear arsenals must bear the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. Our common wish is to see the achievement of substantial and balanced reductions in the global level of nuclear weapons, beginning with those of the two super-Powers. In this connection, the Twelve fully support the objective of the START negotiations, and we welcome the prospect of an early agreement, making substantial cuts in the strategic arsenals of both super-Powers. We also welcome the continuing success of the INF Treaty in eliminating a whole class of nuclear weapons. We hope that current progress in bilateral nuclear-arms negotiations will, as we recommended earlier, be reflected in the overcoming, within the Commission, of some of the obstacles that still exist.

The Twelve also strongly support and are fully committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. They believe that the further spread of nuclear weapons or other explosive devices would endanger stability and threaten regional and global security. The Twelve attach the greatest importance to the maintenance of an effective international nuclear non-proliferation régime and will make every effort to contribute to strengthening non-proliferation and encouraging the participation of further countries in the régime. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an important element in that régime. The Twelve, parties to the NPT or not, will work actively to secure a successful outcome to the discussions which will take place in the forthcoming months, and in particular the deliberations of the Fourth Review Conference of the NPT. They express their concern at the fact that there is a continuing risk that further countries may acquire nuclear weapons and that a number of countries remain outside the non-proliferation régime. The Twelve call on all States to join in efforts to eliminate the risk of nuclear proliferation.

(Mr. Hayes, Ireland)

With reference to the nuclear capability of South Africa, we hope that the progress achieved in 1989 under agenda item 5 can be built on and sustained. We welcome the announcement on 1 February 1990 by the South African Government that it is shutting down its pilot enrichment plant at Valindaba. We hope that South Africa will take further steps to assure the international community that its nuclear programme is intended purely for peaceful purposes. The Twelve reiterate their conviction that the further spread of nuclear weapons can only threaten the stability of the region concerned.

During the 1989 session of the Disarmament Commission, a consultative group continued consideration of various aspects of the question of naval armaments and disarmament. This resulted in a number of substantive findings and recommendations on the subject which could form the basis of further deliberations. The Twelve feel that sustained efforts should be continued in order to make progress on this issue. It was recognized that it is not possible to consider this topic separately from overall efforts to achieve nuclear and conventional disarmament.

Lastly, the Twelve hope that the Commission will be able to discharge its mandate under General Assembly resolution 44/119 H to finalize the draft declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade. Recent international developments have contributed to a new impetus to arms control and disarmament in the world. The Twelve believe that the declaration is a worthwhile development and hope that it will maintain international focus on the disarmament process.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the importance which the Twelve attach to the implementation of the consensus on ways and means of enhancing the functioning of the Disarmament Conference, beginning this year. You have our full support, Sir, in your efforts in this regard, as in other matters.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the high post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation is happy and proud to have you in the Chair. I am confident that under your able leadership this year's session of the Disarmament Commission will have fruitful and successful deliberations on the agenda items. My delegation pledges to spare no efforts in co-operating with you.

Since the Disarmament Commission met last year here at New York, far-reaching changes in the world situation have been taking place. In all of the Warsaw Pact countries a process of democratization has started. East-West relations, with United States-Soviet bilateral relations as their centre-piece, have improved significantly. Assisted by these encouraging developments, bilateral arms-control and disarmament negotiations between the United States and the USSR such as the strategic-arms reduction talks (START) and the nuclear-test talks, together with European regional negotiations, such as those on conventional forces in Europe, have made strides in achieving truly significant progress.

Under such circumstances, while one may talk about the "era of disarmament", various international organizations and mechanisms established over the years for security and arms-control purposes are now called upon to adapt themselves to new situations, and some of them are even questioned as to their raison d'être. This has been the case with most of the European regional organizations and mechanisms so far. Even such other international organizations as the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva and the Disarmament Commission here may no longer be able to remain the exceptions.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

It is for that reason that my delegation welcomed and supported the programme to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission adopted at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly last year and here in the Commission this morning. I should like to stress two points in this connection.

First, while the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is a single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of a limited size of 40 members, the Disarmament Commission is a deliberative body composed of all the Members of the United Nations. Hence, in our opinion, the most important and substantial function of the Disarmament Commission should be to develop common understanding among all participating countries, including those other than member countries of the Conference on Disarmament, through the in-depth study and deliberation of various specific issues of disarmament. Participation in the debate of non-member countries of the Conference on Disarmament is vitally important. I am afraid that the Disarmament Commission would have little significance of its own if those countries did not show much interest in the works of the Commission.

Secondly, all agenda items other than the newly introduced one, "Objective information on military matters", have already been discussed for several years. Therefore, it is my delegation's view that, when there is practically no prospect for making substantial progress towards a consensus on one agenda item or another, we should conclude our deliberations promptly and try to produce a joint statement or a chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect the views or positions of the various delegations in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 44/119 C. As for the new agenda items to be taken up next year, my delegation is prepared to examine any proposal with utmost flexibility, but wishes to know, among other things, the areas of interests and concerns to countries other than Conference on Disarmament members.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

This year is expected to be a very important and critical year for a number of important arms-control and disarmament negotiations both in the nuclear and in the chemical and other conventional weapons fields. Today, I should like to confine myself to the nuclear-disarmament issues.

In spite of the recent developments in East-West relations, it remains a hard fact of life that international political stability will continue to be based upon the balance of nuclear deterrence. Therefore, in pursuing disarmament goals in nuclear fields, we should exert our efforts towards the realization of greater security at a lower level of power balance through a step-by-step approach, without jeopardizing the security interests of the countries concerned.

Today, most important and intensive efforts along this line are being made in three areas of nuclear disarmament - in the fields of nuclear-arms reduction, nuclear non-proliferation, and nuclear-test ban. As a matter of fact, these three areas of nuclear disarmament are closely interrelated, and, in the opinion of my delegation, negotiations in those areas should be conducted in a well-balanced manner.

This year, at the forthcoming summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union, it is expected that all the remaining major issues of the strategic arms reduction talks (START) will be resolved. Furthermore, verification protocols on the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes of 1976 are also expected to be signed at the summit meeting, paving the way for the ratification of both treaties. In addition, the last round of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) prior to the NPT Extension Conference of 1995 is to be convened in August of this year.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

We find ourselves assembled here less than a month before the summit talks between the United States and the Soviet Union to be held in Washington, D.C., and it is our earnest hope that the two leaders will achieve substantial progress in the field of disarmament, which is the expectation of all the nations and peoples of the world. It is also our expectation that the results of the summit talks will favourably influence the outcome of the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the NPT.

As is well known, Japan has consistently attached highest priority to the question of an early realization of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. Japan welcomes, therefore, the recent progress in the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of nuclear testing.

Over the years, the nuclear-test ban has been on the top of agenda items of the Conference on Disarmament. My predecessor, Ambassador Yamada, and myself have been engaged in strenuous efforts - last year and this year - by having a number of informal bilateral consultations with member countries of the Conference on Disarmament in order to find a way to arrive at a consensus mandate for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear-Test Ban.

As a result of such efforts, I am pleased to inform the Commission that significant progress has been achieved during the spring session of the Conference on Disarmament this year, and I am grateful for the constructive and flexible attitude shown on the question and for the co-operation extended to us from each member country of the Conference on Disarmament. It is my intention to continue to make efforts, consulting with countries concerned, in order to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee as early as possible during the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

My delegation believes that the resumption of substantive work on the question of a nuclear-test ban at the Conference on Disarmament will enable us to find out the best possible multilateral approach to this question, complementing the bilateral efforts being made in the field between the United States and the Soviet Union.

At the Disarmament Commission session of the year before last, a guideline for confidence-building measures was adopted. Since then, we have been witnessing rapid and far-reaching changes taking place on the European scene. Inevitably, questions are now being asked as to the applicability of confidence-building measures in Asia and the Far East. It is not my intention today to go into details on that question.

However, I should like to point out that when we consider regional arms control and disarmament issues and regional confidence-building measures, peculiarity of region ought to be taken fully into account. In the Far East, strategic and geopolitical conditions, as well as the historical and social background of various countries, are vastly different from those we find in Europe today. Therefore, in the case of the Far Eastern region, it is of vital importance to begin by attempting to build relationships of confidence among nations in the region by way of solving pending political issues and by way of intensifying dialogue between the nations concerned.

In this connection, I should like to reiterate that the following basic policies and measures Japan has been taking over the years should indeed be called unilateral arms control and confidence-building measures, which contribute in no small measure to the security not only of Japan but also of the region as well as the international community.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

First, under its Peace Constitution, Japan strictly abides by its basic policies of maintaining an exclusively defensive posture and of not seeking to become a military Power that might threaten its neighbours. In line with those policies, Japan firmly upholds its security arrangements with the United States, as well as the three non-nuclear principles of not possessing nuclear weapons, not producing them, and not permitting their introduction into Japan, and has kept its defence capabilities to the minimum required for its defence.

Secondly, Japan strictly regulates arms exports and, in particular, prohibits any export of arms to those countries or regions that are in an international conflict or likely to be involved in such a conflict.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

Thirdly, Japan has been trying to enhance the openness and transparency of its defence capabilities by the annual issuance of white papers on national defence and by other means.

At this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission a new agenda item entitled "Objective information on military matters" is to be addressed. That subject has an important bearing on the question of confidence-building. My delegation hopes that meaningful achievements will be obtained as a result of the preliminary deliberations on the subject.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): Sir, let me first associate myself with those colleagues who have spoken before me to extend their congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. I should also like to felicitate the other officers of the Commission and pledge my delegation's full support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

We have before us important issues on the agenda. Our Commission is mandated not only to address them but also to conclude the consideration of certain items that have already been with us for some time. It is not my intention to address each one of them, inasmuch as our views have been expressed at previous sessions of the Commission. I should like, however, to comment briefly on agenda items 4, 7 and 8.

This session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is convened against the backdrop of ongoing dynamic and fundamental changes in the global political climate. The world is witnessing a rapid evolution towards new patterns of inter-State relations. Those developments have no doubt created opportunities, as well as uncertainties and challenges. National and international agendas and priorities have to be adjusted to suit the demands of the new situation.

A growing disposition towards conciliation and mutual accommodation among States, especially between the major Powers, has led to a marked easing of

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

international tensions and to more vigorous efforts in resolving regional conflicts through dialogue and negotiations. Political and military concepts and strategies born and developed in the cold-war era are suddenly found to be obsolete and no longer adequate to serve the needs and imperatives of today.

In the field of disarmament there are also encouraging developments. Discernible progress in the reduction of strategic and conventional armaments, especially as they relate to the European theatre, is to be noted. The United States and the Soviet Union continue to show a greater disposition to engage in substantive dialogue on a range of issues of critical importance to them and to the world at large. We therefore hope that the forthcoming summit meeting to be held at Washington will lead to substantive agreements, especially on strategic armaments. During the past year there was also some progress in the bilateral negotiations on chemical weapons, which bolsters our hope that the protracted negotiations in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on a convention banning chemical weapons may finally culminate in an agreement.

Those are indeed encouraging prospects. However, following the historic breakthrough manifested in the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty), the momentum of the negotiations on strategic arms and other weapons of mass destruction has been excruciatingly slow, while the arms race, especially in its qualitative aspects, has continued unabated. Moreover, bilateral negotiations have yet to be translated into material progress in the multilateral context through the agreed mechanism of the Conference on Disarmament. That is the sombre reality we face today. In those circumstances, my delegation deems it essential to reiterate the centrality of the question relating to the prevention of nuclear war and to nuclear disarmament and the Commission's contribution to the mutually complementary ongoing bilateral and multilateral endeavours.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

What is called for is a global framework for negotiations at the subregional and regional levels and, most important, at the global, multilateral level. In my delegation's view, such an approach should consist of an all-encompassing and mutually supportive set of measures in all relevant areas. The negotiating process itself could proceed in timed phases and would involve inter alia: the elaboration of the stages of nuclear disarmament, including the responsibilities of the nuclear Powers and the role of non-nuclear States; the identification of the duties and obligations of the nuclear Powers to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear States and to prevent nuclear war; the prohibition of the development, production or use of other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and radiological weapons; the prevention of the expansion of the arms race into outer space and into the seas and oceans; and, lastly, the limitation and reduction of conventional armaments, consistent with the legitimate national-security interests of non-nuclear States.

In that context, my delegation hopes that this session of the Disarmament Commission will address some of those critical issues and provide specific guidelines for negotiations under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament. Thus the stage will be set for the adoption and implementation of substantive and forward-looking measures.

Until recently the question of conventional armaments has been addressed in the Organization only sporadically since its inception by interested delegations. Conventional armaments were used in the more than 150 conflicts that have taken place since the end of the Second World War, resulting in the deaths of more than 20 million persons, many of them civilians, a characteristic feature of modern warfare. It is also worth noting that in all those hostilities the developing countries have been the stage and, indeed, the victims. Yet little attention has

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

been given to the chemical-weapons facet of the arms race. One factor contributing to that reality is the widespread recognition that, destructive as it may be, conventional war does not threaten the survival of mankind, as does the outbreak of nuclear war, with its attendant devastating consequences. It is therefore natural that the parallel questions of nuclear disarmament and of the prohibition of the use of weapons of mass destruction have remained the pre-eminent concerns of our time.

A United Nations study on regional aspects of disarmament took the view that the cessation of the conventional-arms race is a domain in which the inclusion of a regional aspect is particularly important and that conventional disarmament is a field in which the number of possible measures and the scope for regional initiatives is virtually unlimited. In this regard the situation in Europe, with the dramatic changes unfolding there, is particularly relevant, since it is the region with the largest concentration of armaments and armed forces. Elsewhere, consideration should be given to the effective limitation of conventional weapons through the establishment of regional consultative forums or conferences on the initiative of the States concerned.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

My delegation has consistently attached particular importance to item 7, on naval armaments and disarmament. Being an archipelagic State strategically located between two oceans and two continents, and sitting astride busy sea lines of communication, Indonesia has legitimate concerns over the increasing naval arms race, in both its nuclear and its conventional aspects. The geographical proliferation of those armaments represents the most potent danger to many other States, especially in view of the fact that a significant proportion of the world's strategic nuclear capability is to be found at sea. It is all the more disquieting that short-range and medium-range sea-borne nuclear weapons are not the subject of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Excluding those weapons from all disarmament efforts would encourage measures aimed at gaining superiority and would in the process lower the nuclear threshold. Superiority in conventional and nuclear naval forces would also invite the threat or use of force against a coastal State in pursuit of narrow national goals.

In view of those and other ramifications of the ongoing naval arms race, the Commission should at this session address all relevant aspects of naval armaments and disarmament that could form the basis for future negotiations. To facilitate the work of the Commission, Indonesia, together with Sweden and Finland, has submitted a working paper entitled "Promoting global progress in the field of disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures at sea", which appears in document A/CN.10/139.

Lastly, in reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, it is gratifying to note that the Disarmament Commission has achieved a modicum of progress on various issues since its reconstitution more than a decade ago. However a number of items have languished far too long in the Commission. In the context of the opportunities offered by the easing of international tension and

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

the disposition to resolve regional conflicts through negotiations, our work should be geared towards the formulation of recommendations. That will require explicit recognition by all States of the central role of the Organization in disarmament issues. If tangible progress is to be achieved in arms limitation and disarmament, then multilateral negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations should be the rule rather than the exception. We must therefore strengthen, and not diminish, the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

My delegation believes that if indeed the promotion of peace and security through general and complete disarmament remains the commitment of each and every member of the international community, especially the militarily significant States, we must seize the rare opportunity provided by the evolving fundamental changes in international relations. One of the greatest challenges now facing the international community is the search for new political and military concepts and strategies and for a fresh approach and defence postures, whether regional or global, to replace the existing ones emanating from the cold-war era. The United Nations Disarmament Commission is certainly one of the most important forums in which the process of change in the international scene can and should be translated into corresponding progress in the field of disarmament.

Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, Sir, let me congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for its 1990 substantive session. We are certain that your diplomatic skill and experience, coupled with the new atmosphere in international relations, will provide the basic elements for concrete results in the Commission's work.

We should like also to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire for his commendable efforts during the last session to achieve a set of agreements which we are sure will contribute to more effective and more efficient work in the Commission.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

Problems of international security are indissolubly linked with questions of disarmament. The Government of Chile favours enriching the notion of international security through a broader approach encompassing not only its political and military aspects but also its human, economic and social dimensions. To that end, there are a number of ideas we should like to share.

This is the first opportunity since the foundation of the United Nations for the Organization to assume its responsibility to promote concepts and policies of international security reflecting a vision shared by all States Members of the Organization. Today's new political circumstances make that possible.

We all know, and experience has proven, that no country has been able to build stable security for itself by working towards insecurity for its adversaries. The mere accumulation of weapons - nuclear or conventional - intended to achieve military superiority or mere parity has proven economically inefficient and politically ineffective. We know that the arms race does not lead to greater tranquility or stability; rather it breeds mistrust. It is not and never will be the path to greater world security.

We believe rather that security policies must be intended to reduce the insecurity of human beings, families, communities, States and mankind as a whole. The origin and nature of such insecurity varies significantly according to culture and the level of political, economic and social development of States. At the same time, some kinds of insecurity have a potential effect on everyone alike, such as the nuclear threat, the devastation wrought by drugs, terrorism and the deterioration of the environment. We believe it important to have a full picture of the various perceptions of insecurity that are the most important for each country.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

The modern view is that security is not only a strategic or military matter. The first kind of security about which we must concern ourselves is that of the human being: the individual and his basic centres of activity - the family, the neighbourhood and the community. We believe that the security of individuals is as important as, or more important than, the security of States.

We must distinguish between security policies - which must be based on a comprehensive view of the problem, including, as I have noted, its political, economic, social, cultural and military dimensions - and defence policies, which are connected principally with military issues. Thus, the tools of security policies are primarily civil in nature, while the tools of defence policies are primarily military in nature. The practical consequences of that distinction are quite clear.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

What I have said so far has been intended to emphasize that the Commission's agenda is an inseparable part of a modern process in which security tends to be understood as a broad, comprehensive, multidimensional matter. This is a tendency that began to develop a number of years ago. It has been seen here in the Commission; it was seen in particular at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development; and it is seen in studies and research being carried out in various countries, such as the work of the Palme Commission, the Brundtland Commission and the South American Commission for Peace, Regional Security and Democracy.

At the same time, in view of positive international political developments, which we have all been watching with attention and hope, it is likely that the United Nations will now have to assume responsibility - through the Disarmament Commission or some other appropriate body - for encouraging thought about ways and means of achieving a shared understanding of what security should mean in the 1990s. This is a great opportunity to encourage dialogue, carried out calmly and without pressure, given the importance of the issues, so that we may in due course achieve consensus on this delicate matter. One subject that we might address in this way is agenda item 6, "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament", and another is agenda item 9, on the Third Disarmament Decade.

The Chilean Government firmly believes in the work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. It regards the United Nations as the only universal forum for discussion of these matters, which affect the survival of all mankind.

More than ever before we today have an opportunity to make practical progress in disarmament and international security. The super-Powers have continued their negotiations to reduce their nuclear and conventional stockpiles. However, clearly much remains to be done, and they bear an additional responsibility in this respect which they must not shirk.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

We consider it essential to convene a conference to amend the nuclear partial test-ban Treaty in order to put an end to test activities once and for all. No effort or resources should be spared in that regard. All the nations of the world must be able to take part, since that is the only way to ensure that the conference results in practical benefits.

Chile, being in an area adjoining a region in which nuclear tests and explosions are carried out, is particularly concerned about the matter and will do its utmost to ensure that the amendment conference produces the results for which the international community hopes.

My country attaches particular importance to the function of the United Nations Secretariat in disarmament. The role that the Secretary-General has played recently shows that we are on the right path. We must strengthen the functions of the various principal organs of the United Nations system. I should also like to emphasize the work done by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Akashi, and by the Secretary of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Komatina.

No State can disregard the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Neither can we refuse to strengthen the Organization's role, particularly bearing in mind the effective part it played in Namibia's independence process, recently concluded; the successful work it is currently performing in Central America; what it has done with regard to Angola, Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq; and the role to be played in Cambodia and El Salvador.

It is true that there are areas in which greater clarity is required. But there is no doubt that we must show the political will to achieve the results that will enable us to live in a more secure and stable world.

It is clear that nuclear and conventional disarmament must be our prime concern. The recommendations made over recent years are the basis for the achievement and maintenance of international peace and security.

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

The problem of South Africa's nuclear capability should be solved immediately. It is unacceptable that its nuclear facilities should remain outside the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This situation, combined with the shameful apartheid system, directly affects the security and stability of the African continent in a way that the international community cannot accept.

The proposal to declare the 1990s the Third Disarmament Decade must be supported, in a manner that sets practical, attainable objectives. In this connection I must emphasize the need for us to consider new concepts of international security, including increased confidence-building measures, the creation of verification measures acceptable to all and the development of defensive concepts of international security.

With respect to objective information on military matters, Chile believes that we must approve the last of the principles still under discussion. My Government considers that we should not repeat the experience of last year, when the opposition of a few States made it impossible to adopt decisions on the set of principles concerning this question.

The matters that I have outlined suggest that we have a real possibility of making constructive, specific contributions to the work of disarmament. We must not disregard the fact that the Disarmament Commission is the appropriate international forum for consolidating an era of peace which is starting to emerge in relations between States.

You may rely, Mr. Chairman, on Chile's readiness to do its utmost to contribute positively to the discussion of the items on the agenda for the current session, in order to advance and consolidate the Commission's work at one of the moments in its history most favourable to the achievement of practical results.

Mrs. LAYANO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, Mr. Chairman, I wish briefly to express my warm congratulations to you on your election to guide our work during the current session. Our best wishes also go to the other officers of the Commission.

Since the end of the Second World War our planet has never experienced such rapid changes as those that have been occurring since 1989. In just a few months there has been so broad and profound a democratic revolution that it has surprised even the most stalwart defenders of the status quo, whose plans and forecasts have crumbled like a house of cards under the onslaught of events.

However, as we emerge from the darkness of the cold war, we must not allow ourselves to be blinded by the light. The United Nations must take the lead with a strategy meeting the interests of the international community and offering a comprehensive view of the modern world, encompassing a broad internatioanl consensus, the result of a transparent and open democratic process.

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

Given this new state of affairs we need to implement a world policy which must respect the norms of international law. It must be inspired by the defence and protection of the interests of all peoples, based on the search for political solutions to disputes and on the principles regarding non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, respect for the self-determination of peoples, the defence of democratic ideals and respect for human rights, together with the fostering of general and complete disarmament and the commitment of all States to the implementation of those principles of the United Nations which have been so frequently violated in the period of the cold war.

For more than 20 years now the two military alliances of the East and the West have been developing a host of weapons to deal with what each has described as a threat to its own security. The result has been a build-up of monstrous quantities of weapons which has produced the opposite effect: greater insecurity for everybody. Now the two alliances are sitting at the negotiating table, attempting to reduce the stockpiles of weapons. They are attempting to ban, once and for all, the possibility of an armed confrontation between the two blocs. This presupposes recognition of the principle, valid for all parts of the world, that an increase in armaments, instead of increasing security, produces the opposite effect: the reduction of security.

The rest of the world welcomes these events, which portend new ways of resolving the principal problems facing the world today, including priority matters relating to disarmament.

Previous theories on disarmament, enshrined in important United Nations documents, are today becoming a reality. The prospect of a Europe free from the threat of nuclear weapons and with the reduction of conventional forces holds out a promise of peace and tranquillity for that part of the world, which would not

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

merely consolidate regional peace but also help to improve prospects for disarmament and security world wide.

While disarmament measures are of special urgency in the most heavily armed region of the world, and no matter how important and necessary are agreements reached between the main military Powers and their allies, nevertheless world peace and security cannot be defined or achieved solely through agreements between the two leading military blocs. Disarmament measures in a given region must harmonize with disarmament priorities in other parts of the world which, though less heavily armed, nevertheless also need to be able to devote all their scarce resources to their economic and social development.

It is clear that disarmament activities in a given part of the world must be compatible with efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament and must be carried out taking fully into account the need to contribute to international peace and security. Countries in other parts of the world have been anxiously following the process of détente and disarmament in Europe and we feel entitled to hope that this will lead to a more peaceful and less heavily armed world.

This hope leads us logically to trust that the world will be able to benefit from agreements on the reduction of conventional weapons in Europe and that in fulfilment of the disarmament principles and objectives and global security weapons subject to those agreements will be eliminated once and for all. However, that hope is becoming instead a source of frustration and alarm. If the weapons withdrawn from Europe increase the arsenals in other regions, resulting in unprecedented commercial rivalry, that could mean a set-back to the world-wide disarmament efforts and flagrant violation of the principles underlying the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly.

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

Peace and security are objectives desired by all peoples of the world. The reduction of the arsenals in one region must not be offset by a build-up of weapons in other parts of the world, with one category of weapons being replaced by another while weapons withdrawn from one territory are being deployed elsewhere. Only a disarmament process guaranteeing genuine progress and enhancing the security of all countries in the region can be significant in this matter, which is of such vital concern in international relations.

It is necessary to have a global view of the matter and to strengthen the multilateral approach. The Disarmament Commission, as a forum open to participation by all States, must address the core of these problems before they come to compound the grave problems already affecting the majority of the world's population.

The clear changes which have taken place around the world, some of which have a direct impact on the work of the Commission, present us with new realities which must be taken into account.

The strenuous efforts by many delegations to find a more dynamic, effective approach to the work of the Commission reflect the importance attached to this body, an organ of democratic characteristics in which all countries, large or small, powerful or weak, can consider the problems of disarmament which affect the international community. Nevertheless we must bear in mind that a new procedure is not going to resolve the political problems, which require above all greater solidarity and a more constructive approach.

The challenge before us is not a small one. In the weeks to come we shall have to conclude consideration of a number of fundamental issues on the disarmament agenda and make specific recommendations on a number of issues where practical realities make solutions possible.

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

The proximity of two conferences on fundamental issues in the field of nuclear disarmament is such that the Commission must during this session place special emphasis on matters relating to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and to a total nuclear test ban. The Fourth Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Conference to Amend the Partial Nuclear Test-ban Treaty should have clear and precise guidelines from the Disarmament Commission. The Contact Group on item 4 will have to make further efforts to resolve outstanding difficulties relating to those two crucial issues.

A solution to the problem of South Africa's nuclear capability is no less urgent. The introduction of nuclear weapons into Africa is an affront not merely to African countries but also to all countries which support all measures against nuclear proliferation. It is therefore hard to understand the attitude of various countries which are calling for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but nevertheless proving reluctant to co-operate on the long-standing effort to achieve a continent of Africa free from nuclear weapons.

Since 1987 the Commission has been considering general principles and guidelines on conventional disarmament. Notwithstanding progress at the regional level in negotiations in Europe on conventional disarmament, the adoption of recommendations applicable at the general level, benefiting all countries in the world and within the framework of the United Nations, has so far proved to be beyond the Disarmament Commission. This regrettable fact highlights the need to address all aspects of the conventional arms race which are relevant to the international community as a whole, to wit the horizontal and vertical proliferation of conventional weapons, the capacity and effects of present weapons systems and foreseeable developments of such systems, the risks, threats and inherent costs of the arms race, particularly for developing countries, political

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

and economic tendencies encouraging the build-up of weapons and the transfer of armaments, the relationship between nuclear disarmament and conventional disarmament, the special responsibility of the most heavily armed countries and, of course, the effects world wide of current and impending reductions in European conventional armaments.

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

Mr. Chairman, your country has been in the forefront of a long-standing process in the United Nations to achieve a security régime applicable to the seas. The important study on the naval arms race indicates that that régime is based on three pillars of international law: general restrictions on the use of force, the customary law of the sea and the arms-control and disarmament treaties entered into by States. This study reminds us that, in accordance with the principle of freedom of navigation on the world's oceans, all coastal States are, by way of the seas, neighbours of all other coastal States, including all the major naval Powers. In its wisdom, the study also reminds us that, while it recognizes the right of naval forces to operate and travel through international waters, coastal States, particularly the small and medium-sized States, enjoy a legitimate aspiration to what might be called "reasonable security on their marine frontiers", including the expectation of being free from any threat from the sea. The study also indicates that the Convention on the Law of the Sea includes balanced provisions which satisfy the security requirements of both flag States and coastal States and that these must be strictly applied in order to increase the security of both categories of States through confidence-building and security-building measures in line with the Convention and with customary international law.

The practice of certain nuclear-weapon States of refraining from confirming or denying the presence of nuclear weapons on board their vessels calls for the provision of objective information on naval activities which currently have a negative impact on world security. The international community cannot ignore the danger of continuing deployment on the world's seas and oceans of nuclear weapons and weapons-launching systems, together with the geographical deployment of such weapons. This state of affairs makes it all the more urgent to hold bilateral and multilateral negotiations leading to naval disarmament.

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

The lost decade for the development of a large number of third world countries coincided with the decade of the greatest buildup in weaponry in those countries and of uncertainty about their future. The general impoverishment of most of those countries, the growing military expenditures and the increasing complexity of weapons systems contributed to the most critical security problems that emerged over the last decade. In the view of my delegation, the Third Decade for Disarmament must be addressed within the framework of global security, with a view to the prevention of the wars and violence in the third world which have characterized the decades since the Second World War.

A regional approach to the question of security has proved to be one of the most promising ways of addressing the problems of armaments. In the case of the third world, we should regard those regions as part of a global system of security which would encompass conflict situations that already exist: the presence of and/or military and strategic interference by forces from outside a given region; territorial disputes and frontier tensions; the encouragement of internal rebellion and other forms of internal violence; drug trafficking; the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and control of the distribution of conventional weapons.

General Assembly resolution 44/116 E, which led to including the subject of objective information on military matters in the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, reaffirms in paragraph 2 the widely felt conviction that a greater flow of objective information on military capability can help to relieve international tension and contribute to the existence of confidence among States world wide and at the regional and subregional levels and can help to achieve practical disarmament agreements. This concept, which has been widely debated in Europe, has

(Mrs. Layano, Colombia)

resulted in growing interest in other parts of the world. Clearly, this is a practical confidence-building tool which could be used in order to avert the possibility of conflicts arising from misapprehensions or exaggerated fears of military activities taking place either world wide or at the regional level. It can lead to the initiation of arms-control and disarmament processes or help to reduce miltary expenditures.

However, in a complex and varied world, sources of mistrust are manifold and vary from one region to another. There can be mistrust resulting from the possibility of nuclear war or that of a bilateral conflict. There is mistrust due to the concentration of military forces and equipment or mistrust caused by acts of coercion. There is mistrust based on ideological or political disagreement and there is mistrust resulting from underdevelopment and international economic injustice. There is mistrust due to military confrontation and mistrust due to specific policies, such as the use of terrorism, destabilization or intervention. Lastly, there is mistrust that may be motivated by the persistence of unjust situations, whether historical or recent.

We should define objective information on military issues in a broad sense as a relationship of confidence that involves a firm belief in transparency on the part of all concerned, which would imply certainty based on the truth of something specific, on verified facts, and which would, above all, enable States to trust that their fundamental rights and interests - their independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and development - would not be threatened.

In conclusion, my delegation takes a great interest in this timely subject, and we shall therefore endeavour to help as much as we can in a matter that involves constructive policies of peace, co-operation, understanding and good will.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The Byelorussian delegation is pleased to welcome you, Sir, to your post as Chairman, especially since you are the representative of a country which is known for its constructive activity in the consideration of questions of security and disarmament in the United Nations. We wish you success in your responsible work.

Events in the area to which the Commission is devoting its work, that is, the question of disarmament, have been developing at an accelerating pace. The time is ripe for achieving major agreements of principle on disarmament measures at the international-law level and they have been achieved in recent years. I am speaking primarily of the large-scale agreements under way in the area of United States and Soviet strategic offensive weapons, in the area of conventional weapons and the armed forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, in the area of chemical weapons and in a number of other areas which involve arms control and disarmament, as well as confidence-building measures.

The implementation of these decisions and the creation of new political realities in Europe will raise international relations both in the European and in the global context to a radically new level. It will clearly be necessary to make a radical change in the foundations of those relations. The system of security which has been based on confrontation is becoming a thing of the past, and we hope never to return to it.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

Arrangements must be made to replace it with a new system, which, by all indications, will be based increasingly on confidence, openness, reasonable sufficiency in defensive weapons and armed forces with a purely defensive structure - in a word, a system in which military factors will largely be replaced by political ones.

In this process, at the global level, a major role is to be played by the United Nations, as a forum of States which is unique in its makeup, sphere of competence and capabilities. In particular, in the area of multilateral approaches to disarmament our Organization has gained valuable experience and has a unique potential which the times will unquestionably demand.

The need for a new level of United Nations response adequate to the challenges of the times in the area of approaches to disarmament is, in our view, reflected in the document worked out last fall on new methods of work for the Disarmament Commission, which has become an annex to resolution 44/119 C of the General Assembly. The Byelorussian SSR was one of the sponsors of the resolution and actively participated in the drafting and harmonizing of its annex. Our delegation takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission last year, for his determined efforts to bring about the harmonization of this important document, which we are gratified to see adopted today by the Disarmament Commission.

As we see it, the document on ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission has created new tasks for all those participating in its work: first, to take a fresh and unbiased look at the complicated and sometimes tightly tangled contradictions that exist, to try to cut through them by joint efforts in which everyone would forgo purely individual demands for the sake of

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

common agreement. Many years and much effort have been devoted to carrying out the mandate of the Commission in the area of nuclear disarmament.

At the last session a moderate amount of progress was made in harmonizing recommendations, and the cost of that progress can be measured by the sharpness of the disagreement found in this area, in which the stakes are high. Such sharp disagreement shows that the problems of nuclear disarmament continue to be perceived by delegations as crucial, but their approaches to specific recommendations are so different that it will evidently take time, patience and, most important, a strengthening of the role of political factors in security to overcome them.

In the area of conventional disarmament, the Commission's tasks are recognized as timely, particularly in the light of the trend, spreading to many areas of the world, towards an increase in conventional armaments. This trend contains dangerous seeds of instability which, in a closely interconnected world, is fraught with global consequences. Against a background of positive developments in disarmament processes, as a whole, one area that still stands like an untouched glacier is that of naval armaments. The irrationality, and unacceptability of this situation are well known.

Under present conditions, an existing channel, even if a very modest one, for multilateral work on the problem of naval armaments in the Disarmament Commission has a very special significance and, in our view, should be maintained.

A new topic for consideration in our Commission is that of objective information on military matters, of openness. The appearance here of this topic clearly reflects the new spirit of the times. The Byelorussian SSR believes that openness, the elimination of excessive secretiveness and the provision of objective information on military potential constitute a factor in strengthening comprehensive

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

security. It is our opinion that openness measures already undertaken by States should gradually be transformed into a broad policy of openness, which would be global in nature and become part of a global system for building confidence and lessening the danger of war. It would be useful to have agreement within the Disarmament Commission on common goals, principles and machinery for openness.

In our view, the role of the United Nations in disarmament is a question on which a great deal of work has been done, and the manifestation of a spirit of good will on the part of all those engaged in the consideration of this question in the Commission could give us every reason to expect that it will be successfully concluded at this session. We hope that new developments in southern Africa will smooth out the rocky road to consensus on one of the questions on which our Commission has spent the greatest amount of time, namely, the nuclear capability of South Africa.

Lastly, the agenda item on the consideration of the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade can obviously be successfully dealt with on the basis of the useful work done by the Commission last year, provided that the approach is realistic and that attention is focused on the fundamental disarmament goals which unite all of us.

As it has done in earlier years, my delegation will make every effort to co-operate with all delegations in order that the work of the Commission may yield fruitful results.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.